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THE UNIVERSITY AND ADULT EDUCATION. (TITLE SUPPLIED).

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TWO FORCES ARE COLLIDING IN THE LIFE OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY TODAY--HISTORIC SENTIMENT, NURTURED BY THE FACULTY, AND THE PRESSURES OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS TO WHICH ADMINISTRATORS HAVE HAD TO ACCOMODATE. ADULT EDUCATION IS AT THE POINT OF IMPACT AND THE BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY NECESSARY TO MEET THE ISSUE HAVE NOT BEEN RAISED. ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING IDEAS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IS THE CONSORTIUM. THE REGIONAL CENTER DEVELOPED IN NEW ENGLAND COULD BECOME A MODEL LABORATORY FOR A REGIONAL FACULTY OF ADULT EDUCATION WHICH WOULD RELATE INSTITUTIONS, CONDUCT BASIC RESEARCH, PREPARE GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND TEACH ADULTS. TITLE I OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT WILL BE A SOURCE OF FUNDS BUT CAREFUL PLANNING IS IMPERATIVE. A COMRADESHIP BETWEEN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE AND GENERAL EXTENSION WOULD EXTEND RESOURCES BY COMBINING THEIR EXPERTISE IN METHODOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY. FINALLY, THE AUTHOR STATES, THE PRESIDENTS AND TRUSTEES OF INSTITUTIONS SHOULD REALIZE THAT CONTINUING EDUCATION OF ADULTS IS AS VITAL AS THE EDUCATION OF ADOLESCENTS. THIS FUNCTION MUST BE PART OF THE NORMAL BUDGET OF THE INSTITUTION, MUCH LIKE RESEARCH AND TEACHING, NOT AN EXPENDABLE EXTRA. THESE EXCERPTS WERE FROM AN ADDRESS PRESENTED AT A CONFERENCE ON EXTENSION ACTIVITIES (UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND, OCTOBER 25, 1966). (AJ)

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Excerpts from an Address by

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Excerpts from an Address by
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There is a collision of forces taking place in the life of the American university today. I see this as a fundamental issue with profound significance for the future of the university. This head-on collision of forces represents, on the one hand, the one thousand years of tradition and sentiment about the university; namely, that it could serve best if it remained disengaged from society. One has only to read the history of the emergence of the university idea, from the Medieval period on, to know that this is the central sentiment to which the university has held. This is one side. On the other side are the contemporary concerns of an urban, industrial society, which, because of the nature of such a society, thrives on knowledge. Consequently, the university has moved upstage and the contemporary society is calling upon the university to share the knowledge it has. The university is asked not to disengage, but rather to seek an engagement with the public process. Thus we have these two forces: 1) the historic sentiment, built up over a thousand year; and 2) the pressure of public affairs.

It may be said that adult education is at the point of impact of the two forces. So far, we have been unresponsive to this issue. We have been trying to find a way around it, without really meeting the issue squarely, to do so would require raising basic questions about the structure of the university. To avoid the basic questions, we have developed various kinds of institutes, and multidisciplinary programs -- many of which may be good -- but, in the extreme, the modern university literally is overwhelmed by them.

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These activities, it seems to me, are testaments to the fact that the traditional, instruction-orientated model of the university has not been able to accommodate to the multiple obligations which society has given to it.

Look at any university catalogue, for example, and you will find about 50 or 60 of the standard, disciplinary departments. Look on through the catalogue and normally you will find 150 or more arrangements of offerings which do not fit the standard departments. This has implications, of course, for areas other than adult education. I would argue that administrators have been instrumental in bringing about this situation. There are two worlds in the university: on one side is the faculty which tends to hold on tenaciously to the traditional, historic sentiment; and on the other side are the administrators who, in order to get support for the university, have had to accommodate to the contemporary needs of society. The problem is that sometimes we have no one integrating the various mechanisms of the institution.

The second point, and one of the matters that has interested me about New England, has to do with the concept of the regionalization of higher education, the consortium concept. I think we shall see more consortia, both on state and regional levels, in the future. Indeed, I believe that one of the central topics of discussion in American higher education in the next decade will be the consortium idea, the regionalization of resources and state systems. My prediction is that this will be one of the most roundly discussed topics in American education over the next decade. The institutions either will plan and develop consortia voluntarily, or the public will demand that they do so.

With respect to adult education, I think one of the most exciting ideas in the entire movement is embodied in the regional center which is being developed here. It seems to me that this will be one of the great demonstrations, not only in terms of adult education, but in other aspects of higher education, as well. In part because of the great private institutions in the region, you have certain reasons for public institutions to strengthen themselves as a system. We need more demonstrations of the consortium across the country.

As a student of higher education, I have been interested in the great possibilities in New England for the consortium approach. Underlying this interest is my belief that the Achilles' heel of adult education in the future may well be its failure to consolidate as a profession. All the aspects of adult education, including research, adequate teaching, and faculty depth, are a long way from realization in our university communities. For some time I have thought that New England could be a model laboratory for a regional faculty of adult education which would relate the respective institutions, conduct basic research, and prepare graduate students, in addition to teaching adults. I don't know a single institution of higher learning in this country, public or private, that has an adequate, substantive base for adult education. The situation here is made to order for the consortium idea.

The third point is that careful planning will be required in funding adult education programs under Title I of the Higher Education Act. A significant focus is needed to take advantage of the support which society now, apparently, is willing to give adult education. I am fearful that all institutions will take off pet projects that they call adult education, but

which have no focus upon regional advancement. One of the reasons that Title I of the Higher Education Act came into disfavor this year in Congress is that everyone has his own definition of terms: adult education, community service, continuing education, and so on.

A fourth point is that of forming a comradeship between the Cooperative Extension Service and General Extension. These divisions are based on different traditions. The Cooperative Extension Service had an elaborate methodology, but it has never known what to do with adult education in the broader sense. General education, had on the other hand, a noble philosophy but never had the methodology to pursue it. And so on the one hand we have esoteric ends and on the other we have rather ponderous means, owing to quite different traditions and backgrounds. I believe that the country is long overdue in converging the two traditions and developing a creative means of extending the resources of our institutions.

The fifth point, and the reason why a meeting of this kind is important, is that we the presidents and trustees of the institutions have not fully realized that continuing education of adults is just as vital as the education of adolescents. This point refers to the first issue about the structure of the institution. In spite of the fact that many able people work very hard in the extension and adult education movement, their concerns have not been shared generally by people in central leadership positions. This has to change. The presidents and trustees should see adult education as a vital interplay of the institution and the public, instead of seeing it as an expendable program if it can not pay its own way. This attitude is beginning to break down, I think, but we still have too much of it. I believe that adult education should be budgeted as a normal function of an institution, much like research and teaching. One of the constraints of adult education is that the budgets of

our universities are built, almost exclusively, around on-campus instruction. Then, when we engage faculty, we ask them to moonlight by teaching extension courses. In short, we have not been very responsible in budgeting for the total university enterprise. We should find straightforward ways of helping continuing education to stand on its own feet.

These five points are derived from the important issues in this field: the conflict within the university; the regionalization of resources; finding a focus for the field; merging cooperative and general extension movements; and involving the presidents and trustees.